

The Story of The Sun 1833 to 1918

Influence of the Beaches, Father and Sons—Coming of the Telegraph and Formation of the Associated Press—The Civil War

This is the seventh of a series of articles narrating the history of THE SUN and giving a vital, intimate view of metropolitan life and journalism during more than eighty eventful years. The first article, printed on February 24, told of the founding of the paper by Benjamin H. Day in September, 1833, and of its rapid rise to success. The second and third articles gave full accounts of the memorable moon hoax, which made THE SUN famous all over the world. Succeeding articles continued the paper's prosperous record under its second proprietor, Moses Yale Beach, to 1841, when "The Tribune" was established.

By FRANK M. O'BRIEN.

IN the first number of the Tribune Greeley announced his intention of excluding the police reports which had been so valuable to "our leading penny papers"—meaning THE SUN and the Herald—and of making the Tribune "worthy of the hearty approval of the virtuous and refined." It was a week before THE SUN mentioned its former friend, and then it was only to say:

A word to Horace Greeley—if he wishes us to write him or if he wishes to write him. He must first go to school and learn a little decency. He must further resist the dirty, malignant and whole-sale falsehood which he procured to be published in the Albany Evening Journal a year ago last winter, with the hope of injuring THE SUN. He must then deal in something besides misstatements of facts. . . . Until he does all this we shall feel very indifferent to any threats that he can make at us with his dagger of truth.

Soon afterward THE SUN rubbed it in by quoting the Albany Evening Journal:

Greeley is a large New England squaw, and it would make as capable an editor as Horace. . . . But Greeley was a lively young man in spite of his eccentric ways and his habit of letting one leg over his shoulder hang out of his unpolished boots. Only when he started the Tribune, he had had a lot of experience, particularly with politicians and with fads. He still believed in some of the fads, including temperance—which was then considered a fad—vegetarianism and Abolition. He had been, too, a poet, and his verses lived to haunt his mature years. He had to give away most of the 5,000 copies that were printed of the first number of the Tribune, but in a month he had a circulation of 8,000 and in two months he doubled it.

Early Career of Henry J. Raymond

Greeley had the instinct for getting good men, but not always the knack of holding them. One of his early editors was Henry J. Raymond, who attracted his attention as a boy orator for the White cause. Raymond worked for Greeley's New Yorker and later for the Tribune. He was a good reporter, using a system of shorthand of his own devising.

On one occasion, at least, he enabled the Tribune to beat the other papers. He was sent to Boston to report a speech, and he took with him the printer and his cases of type. After the speech Raymond and his compositors boarded the boat for New York and as fast as the reporter transcribed the notes the printers put the speech into type. On the arrival of the boat the New York type was ready to put into the forms and the Tribune was on the street hours ahead of its rivals.

Greeley paid Raymond \$8 a week until Raymond threatened to leave unless he received \$20 a week. He got it, but Greeley made such a fuss about the matter that Raymond realized that further increase would be out of the question. Presently he went to the Courier and Enquirer, and from 1843 to 1850 he tried to restore some of the glory that once had crowned Col. Webb's paper.

In this period Raymond and his former employer Greeley fought their celebrated editorial duel—with pens, not mahogany handled pistols—on the subject of Fourierism, that theory of social reorganization which Greeley seemed anxious to spread and which was then a fashionable fad. Raymond, the young man, Albert Brisbane, now perhaps better remembered as the father of Arthur Brisbane, but Col. Webb's paper would not wake wide enough to suit the ambitious Raymond, who seized the opportunity of becoming the first editor of the New York Times.

Other men who worked for Greeley's Tribune in its young days were Bayard Taylor, who wrote articles from Europe; George William Curtis, the essayist; Count Gurowski, an authority on foreign affairs; and Charles A. Dana.

Beach soon recognized Greeley as a considerable rival in the morning field, and there was a long tussle between THE SUN and the Tribune. It did not content itself with words, and there were street battles between the boys who sold the two papers. Stung by one of Beach's articles, Greeley called THE SUN "the slimy and venomous instrument of Locofocoism, Jesuitical and deadly in politics and groveling in morals." The term Locofoco had then lost its original application to the Equal Rights section of the Democratic party and was applied—particularly by the Whigs—to any sort of Democrat.

The Sons of Moses Y. Beach.

Moses Y. Beach had no such young journalists about him as Dana or Raymond, but he had two sons who seemed well adapted to take up the ownership of THE SUN. He took them in as partners on October 22, 1845, under the title of "M. Y. Beach & Sons." The elder son, Moses Sperry Beach, was then 23 years old, and had already been well acquainted with the newspaper business, particularly with the mechanical side of it. Before his father took him as a partner young Moses had joined with George Roberts in the publication of the Boston Daily Times, but he was glad to drop this and de-

qu岸 and the Journal of Commerce a pretty penny.

With the coming of the Mexican War there were special trains to be run in the South. And now the telegraph, with its expensive tolls, was magnetizing money out of every newspaper's till. Not only that, but there was only one wire, and the correspondent who got to it first usually hogged it, paying tolls to have a chapter from the Bible, or whatever was the reporter's favorite book, put on the wire until his story should be ready to start.

It was all wrong, and at last, through pain in the pocket, the newspapers came to realize it. At a conference held in the office of THE SUN, toward the close of the Mexican War, steps were taken to lessen the waste of money, men and time.

An Era of Cooperation.

At this meeting, presided over by Gerard Hallock, the veteran editor of the Journal of Commerce, there were represented THE SUN, the Herald, the Tribune—the three most militant morning papers—the Courier and Enquirer, the Express, and Mr. Hallock's own paper. The conference formed the Harbor Association, by which one fleet of news boats would do the work for which half a dozen had been used, and the New York Associated Press, designed for cooperation in the gathering of news in centres like Washington, Albany, Boston, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Alexander Jones of the Journal of Commerce became the first agent of the new organization. He had been a reporter on both sides of the Atlantic, and it was he who used the first cipher code for use in the telegraph, saving time and tolls.

Thus in the office where some of the bitterest invective against newspaper rivals had been penned there began

an era of good feeling. So busy had the world become and full of news, THE SUN strove for the patronage of the people, with a capital P, but it had educated them away from the elementary Journalism of the day.

As an example of the change in the personal relations of the newspaper editors and proprietors the guests present at a dinner given by Moses Y. Beach in December, 1848, when he retired from business and turned THE SUN over to his sons Moses and Alfred, were the venerable Major Noah, then retired from newspaper life; Gerard Hallock, Horace Greeley, Henry J. Raymond of the Courier and Enquirer and James Brooks of the Express. All praised Beach and his fourteen years of labor on THE SUN, but there was never a word about Benjamin H. Day. Evidently that gentleman's reentry into the newspaper field as the proprietor of the True Sun had put him out of tune with his brother-in-law.

Richard Adams Locke was there, however—the only relic of the first regime. What THE SUN thought of itself then is indicated in an editorial printed on December 4, when the Beach brothers believed their father, now in bad health:

We ask those under whose eyes THE SUN does not shine from day to day of readers to consider with the largest and widest of eyes whether it is not one of the wonders of the age. Does it not contain a mass of information that is valuable in a diurnal sheet? Where is more effort or enterprise expended for so small a return?

Of this effort and enterprise we feel proud; and a circulation of over fifty thousand copies of our sheet every day, among at least five times that number of readers, together with the largest cash advertising patronage on this continent, convinces us that our pride is widely shared.

THE SUN met Ben Day had turned over to Moses Y. Beach was no longer recognizable. Fifteen years had wrought many changes from the time when the young Yankee printer launched his venture on the tide of chance. The telegraph had made over American Journalism. The police courts, the little local scandals, the animal stories—all the trifles upon which THE SUN had made his way to prosperity—were now being shoved aside to make

room for the quick, hot news that came in from many quarters. THE SUN still strove for the patronage of the people, with a capital P, but it had educated them away from the elementary Journalism of the day.

The elder Beach was enterprising, but never rash. He made THE SUN a better business proposition than ever it was under Day. Ben Day carried a journalistic sword at his belt; Beach a pen over his ear. Perhaps Day could not have carried THE SUN up to a circulation of 50,000 and a money value of \$250,000, but on the other hand, it is unlikely that Beach could ever have started THE SUN.

Once it was started and once he had seen how it was run, the task of keeping it going was fairly easy for him. He was a good publisher. Not content with getting out THE SUN proper he established THE WEEKLY SUN, issued on Saturdays and intended for country circulation, at \$1 a year. In 1848 he got out the AMERICAN SUN, at twelve shillings a year, which was shipped abroad for the use of Europeans who cared to read of our rude American doings. Another venture of Beach's was the ILLUSTRATED SUN and MONTHLY LITERARY JOURNAL, a sixteen page magazine full of woodcuts.

Mr. Beach had for sale at THE SUN office all the latest novels in cheap editions. He wrote a little book himself—"The Wealth of New York: A Table of the Wealth of the Wealthy Citizens of New York City Who Are Estimated To Be Worth One Hundred Thousand Dollars or Over, With Brief Biographical Notices." It sold for two bits.

Perhaps Beach was the father of the newspaper syndicate. In December, 1841, when THE SUN received President Tyler's message to Congress by special messenger, he had extra editions of one sheet printed for twenty other newspapers, using the same type for the body of the issue, and changing only the title head. In this way such papers as the Vermont Chronicle, the Albany Advertiser, the Troy Whig, the Salem Gazette and the Boston Times were able to give the whole text of the message to their readers without the delay and expense of setting it in type. Through conservatism, good business sense and steady work Moses Y. Beach was then a handsome fortune, and

when he retired he was only 48. His last years were spent at the town of his birth, Wallingford, where he died on July 19, 1868, six months after THE SUN had passed out of the hands of a Beach and into the hands of a Dana.

Beach Bros., as the new ownership of THE SUN was entitled, made but one important change in the appearance and character of the paper during the next few years.

Up to the coming of the telegraph THE SUN had devoted its first page to advertising, with a spice of reading matter that usually was in the form of reprint—miscellany, as some newspaper men call it, or bogus, as most printers term it. But when the telegraphic news came to be common both costly newspapers began to see the importance of attracting the casual reader by means of display on the first page. The Beaches presently used one or two columns of the latest telegraph matter on the first page; sometimes the whole page would be so occupied.

In 1850, from July to December, they issued an EVENING SUN, which carried no advertising.

On April 6, 1852, Alfred Ely Beach, more concerned with scientific matters than with the routine of daily publication, withdrew from THE SUN, which passed into the sole possession of Moses S. Beach, then only 30 years old.

It was reported that when the partnership was dissolved the division was based on a total valuation of \$250,000 for the paper which less than nineteen years before Ben Day had started with an old handpress and a handful of type. Horace Greeley, telling a committee of the British Parliament about American newspapers, named that sum as the amount for which THE SUN was valued in the sale by brother to brother.

"It was very cheap," he added.

In 1852, when Moses Sperry Beach came into the sole ownership of THE SUN, it was supposed that the slavery question had been settled forever, or at least with as much finality as was possible in determining such a problem. The Missouri Compromise, devised by Henry Clay, had acted as a legislative mandragora which lulled the United States and soothed the spasms of the extreme Abolitionists. Even Abraham Lincoln, now passing 40 years, was losing that

interest in politics which he had once exhibited and was devoting himself almost entirely to his law practice in Springfield, Ill.

THE SUN had plenty of news to fill its four wide pages and its daily circulation was above 50,000. The Erie Railroad had stretched itself from Piermont, on the Hudson River, to Dunkirk, on the shore of Lake Erie. The Hudson River Railroad was built from New York to Albany. The steamship Pacific of the Collins Line had broken the record by crossing the Atlantic in nine days and nineteen hours. The glorious yacht America had beaten the British Titania by eight miles in a race of eighty miles.

Kossuth, come as the envoy plenipotentiary of a Hungarian ambitious for freedom, was New York's hero. Lola Montez, the champion heart breaker of her century, danced hither and yon. The volunteer firemen of New York ran with their engines and broke one another's heads. The Young Men's Christian Association, designed to divert youth to gentler practices, was organized and held its first international convention in Buffalo in 1854. Lieut. Ulysses S. Grant of the United States Army was in California, recently the scene of the struggle between outlaws and the vigilantes, and was not very sure that he liked the life of a soldier.

Messrs. Heenan, Morrissey and Yankee Sullivan furnished at frequent intervals inspiration to American youth. The cholera attacked New York regularly, and as regularly did THE SUN print its prescription for cholera medicine, which George W. Busted, a druggist, had given to Moses Yale Beach in 1849, and which is still in use for the subjugation of inward quailings. The elder Beach, enjoying himself in Europe with his son Joseph Beach, sent articles on French and German life to his son Moses Sperry Beach's paper.

Literature was still advancing in New England. Persons of refinement were reading Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" and "The House of Seven Gables," Mark Twain's "Reveries of a Bachelor," Irving's "Mahomet" and Parkman's "Conspiracy of Pontiac." Marlon Harland had written "Alone," Down in Kentucky young Mary Jane Holmes was at work on her first novel, "Tempest and Sunshine." But how both high and low were bent over the

ally; but it did not disguise its dislike of the little Giant's unhappy success. The effort to organize the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska on the principle of squatter sovereignty. After the peace and quiet that had followed the Missouri Compromise this attempt to bring slavery across the line of 36 degrees and 30 minutes by means of a local option scheme looked to THE SUN very much like kicking a sleeping dragon in the face.

After Douglas had been successful in putting his bill through Congress THE SUN still rejected its principles. Commenting on the announcements of certain Missourians that they would take their slaves into the new Territory, THE SUN said:

They may certainly take their slaves with them into the new Territory, but when they get there they will have no law for holding the slaves. Slavery is a creation of local law, and until a Legislature of Kansas or Nebraska enacts a law recognizing slavery, all slaves taken into the Territory will be entitled to their freedom.

It was at this time that the germs of secession began to show themselves on the culture plates of the continent. THE SUN was hot at the suggestion of a division of the Union:

It can only excite contempt when any late member of Congress or a newspaper editor, who has been a member of the Union as an event which may easily be brought about. There is moral treason in this habit of continually depreciating the value of the Union.

THE SUN saw that Douglas's repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a smashing blow delivered by a Northern Democrat to the Democracy of the North; but the second blow, which was not revealed in all its intensity until 1856, when Representative Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina made his murderous attack on Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in the Senate chamber, was well covered by THE SUN, not only through its Associated Press despatches but also in special correspondence from its Washington representative, "Hermite."

It had a report nearly a column long of Sumner's speech, "The Crime Against Kansas," which caused Brooks to assault the great opponent of slavery.

Rise of Republican Party.

That year was also the year of the first national convention of the Republican party, conceived by the Abolitionists, the Free Soilers and the Know Nothings, and born in 1854. THE SUN had a special reporter at Philadelphia to tell of the nomination of John C. Fremont, but the paper supported Buchanan. Its readers were of a class naturally Democratic, and although the paper was not a party organ and had no liking for slavery or secession the new party was too new, perhaps too much colored with Know Nothingism, to warrant a change of policy.

On the subject of the Dred Scott decision, written by Chief Justice Taney and handed down two days after Buchanan's inauguration, THE SUN was blunt:

We believe that the State of New York can confer citizenship on men of whatever race, and that its citizens are entitled, by the Constitution, to be treated in Missouri as citizens of New York State. To treat them otherwise is to discredit our State sovereignty.

John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry was found worthy of a column in THE SUN, but space was cramped that morning for four columns of news to be given to a report of the New York firemen's parade. The firemen read THE SUN.

But Mr. Beach sent a special man to report Brown's trial at Charleston, Va. The editorial columns echoed the sense of the correspondence—that the old man was not having a fair show. Besides, THE SUN believed that Brown was insane and belonged in a madhouse rather than on the gallows. It printed a 500 word series by Henry Ward Beecher on Brown's raid. Beecher and the Beaches were very friendly, and there is still in Beecher's famous Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, a pulpit made of wood brought from the Mount of Olives by Moses S. Beach. When John Brown was hanged, December 2, 1859, THE SUN remarked:

The bravery of the Old Dominion will breathe easier now. . . . But, while Brown cannot be regarded as a common murderer, it is only a common sense of fanatic zeal that will attempt to elevate him to the rank of a martyr.

In the Illinois campaign of 1858 THE SUN was slow to recognize Abraham Lincoln's prowess as a speaker, although Lincoln was then championed by the Illinois Whigs. Referring to the debates between Lincoln and Douglas in their struggle for the Senate seat, THE SUN said:

An extraordinary interest is attached by the people of this State to the campaign which Senator Douglas is conducting in the State of Illinois. It is rival for the Senatorial nomination, Mr. Lincoln being no match for the Editor of the Tribune. Senator Trumbull has taken the stump on the Republican side.

Two years later, when Lincoln was nominated for President, THE SUN saw him in a somewhat different light.

Mr. Lincoln is an active State politician and a good stump orator. As to his personal character, we have no matter upon which we need not at present speculate.

But the time for THE SUN to speculate came only three days later (May 22, 1860), when it frankly stated:

It is now admitted that Mr. Lincoln's nomination is a strong one. He is, emphatically, a man of the people. . . . That he would, if elected, make a good President, we do not entertain a moment's doubt. His election is a gain to the people. The people are tired of being ruled by professional politicians.

That was written before the Democratic national convention. To nominate Sumner, the Democrats tried to nominate Sumner, but they failed. Douglas had estranged the anti-slavery Democrats of the North. When Douglas was nominated THE SUN remarked:

Of the six candidates in the field—Lincoln, Bell, Houston, Douglas, Breckinridge and Fremont—the best chance of an election by the people.

THE SUN had no illusions as to the candidacy of John C. Breckinridge, the Vice-President under Buchanan, when he was nominated for President by the Democrats of the South, who refused to flock to the colors of Douglas.

The secessionists do not expect that Breckinridge will be elected. Should Lincoln and Sumner be elected, then the vote of the free States, then the design of the conspirators is to come out openly for a disruption of the Union and the erection of a Southern confederacy.

"The Union cannot be dissolved" THE SUN declared on August 4, "whoever shall be elected President!"

And on the morning of election day THE SUN, which had taken little part except to criticize the conduct of the Democratic campaign, said prophetically, "History turns a leaf to-day." Its comment on the morning after the election was characteristic of its attitude during the canvass:

Mr. Lincoln appears to have been elected, and yet the country is safe.

In a paragraph of political gossip printed a week later THE SUN said that Horace Greeley could have the Collectorship of the port of New York if he resigned his claims to a seat in the Cabinet, and that—

For the postmaster-general Charles A. Dana of the Tribune, Daniel Williams, Thomas B. Stillman and Amos J. Williamson are named. Either Mr. Dana or Mr. Williamson would fill the office creditably.

That was probably the first time that Charles A. Dana got his name into THE SUN paper.

The Crisis of Secession.

Although unqualifiedly opposed to secession, THE SUN did not believe that military coercion was the best way to prevent it. It saw the temper of South Carolina, and other Southern States, but thought that it saw, too, a diplomatic way of curing the disorder. South Carolina, it said, had a greater capacity for indignation than any other political body in the world. Here was the way to stop its wrath:

Open the doors of the Union for a free and inglorious secession, and you dry up the machine in an instant.

This was somewhat on a plane with Horace Greeley's advice in the Tribune—"Let the erring slavers go in peace." THE SUN, however, was more Machiavellian.

Our proposition is that the Constitution be so amended as to permit any State, within a limited period, and upon her surrender of her share in the Federal property, to secede from the confederacy (the Union) in peace. It is a plan to emasculate secession by depriving it of its present stimulating illegality. Does any one suppose that South Carolina would withdraw from the Union if her withdrawal were normal?

This was printed on December 8, 1860, some weeks before the fate of the Crittenden compromise, beaten by Southern voters, showed beyond doubt that the South actually preferred disunion.

With mingled grief and indignation THE SUN watched the Southern States march out of the Union. It poured its wrath on the head of the Mayor of New York, Fernando Wood, when that peculiar statesman suggested, on January 7, 1861, New York City should also secede. "Why may not New York disrupt the bonds which bind her to a venal and corrupt master?" Wood had inquired.

THE SUN gave faith in Lincoln, than most of its Democratic contemporaries exhibited. Of his first inaugural speech it said:

There is a manly sincerity, gentleness and strength to be felt in the whole address. The day after the fall of Fort Sumter THE SUN found a moment to turn on the South loving Herald:

We state only what the proprietor of the Herald undoubtedly believes when we say that if the national ensign had not been hoisted on Fort Sumter, it would have been a concession to the gathering crowd, the issue of that paper for another day would have been more than doubtful.

Shortly afterward THE SUN charged that the Herald had had in its office a full set of Confederate colors, "ready to fling to the breeze of treason which it and the Mayor hoped to raise in this city." Later in the same year THE SUN accused the Daily News and the States-Zeitung of disloyalty, and intimated that the Journal of Commerce and the Express were not what they should be. The owner of the Daily News was Ben Wood, a brother of Fernando Wood. In its youth the News had been a Tammany organ, and it was not until a considerable distinction. It was an offshoot of the Evening Post, and one of its first editors was Parke Godwin, son-in-law of William Cullen Bryant. Another of its early editors was Samuel J. Tilden.

Wood, who was a Kentuckian by birth, made the News a Tammany organ and used it to get himself elected to Congress, where he served as a Representative from 1861 to 1868, constantly opposing the continuation of the war. THE SUN's accusation of disloyalty against the News was echoed in Washington, and for eighteen months, early in the war, the News was suppressed. The States-Zeitung, also included in THE SUN's suspicion, was owned by Oswald Ottendorfer, who had come into possession of the great German daily in 1859 by his marriage to Mrs. Jacob Uhl, widow of the man who established it as a daily.

If secession in the ranks of the "copperhead" journalists was disastrous to the owner of the Journal of Commerce, Gerard Hallock, who had been one of the great figures of American Journalism for thirty years. In the decade before the war Hallock bought and sold at least a hundred slaves and paid for their transportation to Liberia; yet he was one of the most uncompromising supporters of a national pro-slavery policy. When the American Home Missionary Society withdrew its support from slave holding churches in the South Hallock was one of the founders of the Southern Aid Society, designed to take its place.

In August, 1861, the Journal of Commerce was one of several newspapers denounced by the Grand Jury of the United States Circuit Court for "encouraging rebels now in arms against the Federal Government by expressing sympathy and agreement with them." Hallock's paper was forbidden the use of the word "secession." He was retired from business, never wrote another line for publication, and died four years later.

Early Troubles of the "World."

Another contemporary of THE SUN which suffered during the war was the World, then a very young paper. It had first appeared in June, 1860, as a highly moral daily sheet. Its express purpose was to give all the news that it thought the public ought to have. This meant that it intended to exclude from its staff columns all thrilling police reports, slander suits, divorce cases and details of murders. It refused to print theatrical advertising.

The World had a fast printing press

Continued on Tenth Page.



HENRY J. RAYMOND OF THE TIMES



ALFRED E. BEACH SON OF MOSES Y. BEACH WHO LEFT THE SUN TO START THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. FROM A PHOTO IN POSSESSION OF THE LATE JAMES BEACH CASPER.

HORACE GREELEY FOUNDER OF THE TRIBUNE AND ONE OF THE CHIEF PIONEERS OF THE SUN IN THE EARLY DAYS.